

FRANK ELBERT MIDKIFF

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Frank Elbert Midkiff

(1887 -)

Mr. Midkiff, a prominent community leader, was born in Illinois and came to Hawaii in 1913 to teach at Punahou School where he organized the Reserve Officers Training Corps in 1916. In 1917 he married Ruth Richards, a 1911 graduate of Punahou. They had three children--Mary Wilson, Robert Richards, and Frances Elizabeth.

During World War I he was a Captain of Infantry, in charge of Officers Training School at Schofield Barracks. He was employed by Lewers and Cooke Company from 1919 until 1923 when he was asked to become the president of the Kamehameha Schools, a position he held until 1934.

In 1935 Mr. Midkiff earned his Ph.D. in education at Yale University. He then began to organize community associations in the Islands and was simultaneously treasurer of the J.B. Atherton Estate and the Juliette M. Atherton Trust. He became a trustee of the Bishop Estate in 1939; a trustee of Punahou School in 1940; and High Commissioner of the Trust Territory from 1953 to 1954.

Mr. Midkiff has been a member and chairman of many committees, commissions, and community projects. After serving as the Royal Danish Consul in Honolulu, he was knighted by the King of Denmark. He has co-edited and co-authored several books and has written articles on education.

Mr. Midkiff narrates his reminiscences in this transcript, describing important events in his life and detailing some of his outstanding accomplishments.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH FRANK ELBERT MIDKIFF

At his Nuuanu Valley home, 4151 Nuuanu Pali Drive, 96817

November 2, 1971

F: Frank Elbert Midkiff

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: Maybe you could start by telling me something about your family, what your father did.

F: Yes. My forebears came across from Europe at the time of the Ulster famine, came on through the Cumberland Gap. There is a little town by the name of Midkiff on the Monongahela River in West Virginia.

M: Oh! Mononganela? [sic]

F: Monongahela River, yes. It flows into the Ohio [River]. But it never grew to be a large town. It's still small because it's on a fast, deep river and at the junction of the Monongahela and the Ohio, Huntington was started later and it grew very fast because of the junction of rivers and shipping and so forth. So Huntington grew very fast and this little town of Midkiff is still a small, little West Virginia town. (Lynda chuckles)

And so my family came on into Kentucky and made friends with the Indians--got along with them--about the time of Daniel Boone and cleared the hills of tall hickories, oaks and beeches, planted tobacco. They were tobacco growers. And as the rains came, tobacco is clean farming and soil was washed away and leached away, then they would move to new ground, clear another area and continued to clear and plant in that way. But they ran out of area in due time and learned of the deep, rich soil in southern Illinois which is formed by the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers. Missouri and Mississippi, there's deep soil there so they moved over to Illinois before I was born and my mother's parents did the same thing.

M: So both sides come from the same place, then.

F: Well, my father's parents came from Owensboro and my moth-

er's near to Lexington, over in that direction, but nevertheless they met. They came together in the flora part of southern Illinois and they were very successful in farming in that rich soil. [James Jesse Midkiff wed Bertha Wilson.]

My father became a minister. Even while he was in Kentucky he went to Louisville Seminary and studied for the ministry and became a Baptist minister. Before he finished that, though, he had taught three years--taught school. My mother was a schoolteacher for thirteen years before she was married, so that is the type of family origin that I had.

My grandfather on my mother's side was a carpenter and an outstanding cabinetmaker, well-reputed for his cabinet work in southern Illinois.

So we moved from town to town, my father getting better and better churches and pastorates all the time, and finally we wound up, when I can remember as a boy, in Old Stonington, Illinois. Old Stonington is named after Stonington, Connecticut and the people who came out there and settled it were Connecticut Yankees, right in the middle of Illinois in the deep-soil Corn Belt of Illinois. They dug great ditches to drain the areas, flat areas with deep soil, and it became very productive of all types of farm products, particularly corn, oats, wheat, cattle, pigs, sheep, so on, so it became quite a well-to-do place and socially rather carefully structured. (chuckles)

M: Let me check this (the recording) before we. . . . It's fine.

F: All right?

M: Uh huh.

F: So it was a little bit of Connecticut moved right out there and my father and mother and their family was a little bit of the South moved right in to serve as pastor of that group. It was an interesting experience and worked out very well. He was pastor there for seventeen years in that one pastorate. Then he moved into the new town of Stonington on the Wabash Railroad until he retired. So that is the sort of background.

We children, of course, were accustomed to doing all the work. We had a number of children. There were two boys, a girl, two boys, a girl, two boys, a girl--nine children--(laughter) and about the time I was growing up there were seven in the family left. Two had passed away.

M: Which one were you in the order?

F: The oldest boy, Herbert, died of pneumonia at one year of

age. The second was my brother Earl who was a senior vice-president of the Hawaiian Trust here until he retired; then my sister Grace who was with her husband [Arthur Elsworth Robinson] here when he was the principal of Punahou Junior School [1919-26]. Then they went back to Columbia University and Mr. Robinson became a Doctor of Education and my sister got her master's degree and they both became professors at Columbia University until they retired there. Then I was the next in line and I had a brother younger than myself who is now in New Jersey, a retired teacher. And a sister that came along there, she passed away with scarlet fever at age seven.

Then two boys, my brother John who was manager of Waialua Plantation here for ten years until he retired. By the way, he came over here to have charge of agricultural food production in World War I, 1917. We were cut off from the mainland and we just had to grow our own food here and so he was in charge of it. Quite an interesting responsibility. He was a graduate of the University of Illinois in agriculture. After that he went into the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association. He spent a year with me when I was the president of the Kamehameha Schools. He served as principal of the boys' school one year, then Castle & Cooke took him to become the number-two man in charge of production there, after which he became the manager at Waialua.

So then my younger brother Bob, after whom my son is named--Robert Richards Midkiff. My brother Robert Forrest Midkiff was a very outstanding athlete and student at Knox College, a very brilliant young fellow; great promise. He was a pursuit pilot in World War I and after serving there awhile he was brought back to train pilots in pursuit. At the end of the war he was honorably discharged and he was placed in charge of the Curtis southwest airplane sales business and he was doing very well there indeed. Another pilot friend of his was there in charge of the Laird Swallow planes. One Sunday they both went up and there were thousands of people to see them perform--they were expert--and Bob was in one of McLean's Swallow planes and the first dive he took, a wing broke right off and they both fell to their death.

Our youngest sister, Ruth--Bertha Ruth--was born at the time of my mother's death and she was taken charge of by a neighbor of ours, Mrs. Sanders, and raised through her childhood and our father acted as father and mother for us and held the rest of the family together.

M: How old were you when your mother died?

F: Twelve years of age.

M: Twelve. That must have been difficult.

F: Excuse me?

M: That must have been very difficult on you children.

F: It really was something. We always had in our home what we called a hired girl there, a very competent member of a local family who came and worked for us for her board and a small salary, but a very helpful member of the family so we got along in that way. We spent the first year, however, going down to southern Illinois again and living with our grandmother that first year after my mother passed away and that was an interesting experience for us all to go through. We all had to do the required work.

We had there, at the Old Stonington place where we lived seventeen years, a home-lot with its house, barn and so forth and another forty-acre piece adjacent to it which was lent to us--given to us to use. We had all kinds of garden material built there and always had several cattle, pigs and chickens. We did all that work, milked the cows and did all the morning chores before hiking a mile to school over dirt roads in all kinds of weather to a one-room school so I was brought up in a one-room school, grades one to eight, until I had finished the sixth grade.

Then by that time we moved into Stonington and I went to a city school that had several buildings, a separate high school and so forth, but it was a very interesting way to learn, to be listening all day to older students. We were taught to read, as a matter of fact, by our father and mother before we got into school.

M: Did you start school at age six?

F: I guess it was a little bit younger for myself, somewhat before, during the fifth year I think. It was a very interesting life, right next to nature, born into the life of the farm. One year during high school I worked for a Danish family and worked for the wife, Mrs. Schaping, and received ten dollars a month with board and room for work, doing almost everything. She was a very meticulous housekeeper and manager and it was probably the best education I ever had. (chuckles)

I had to get up in the morning and go out first to clean the stables and harness the horses for the older men, then I had to go and gather the eggs and clean those places, come in, then after breakfast wipe the dishes. Then different days we would do such things as scrubbing the walks and the floors and washing. I ran the washing machine. I churned the butter. It was really a wonderful education. Took care of the chickens and worked in the

garden. A terrific amount of garden work. A wonderful garden she had. So that was a great experience during that summer.

The next summer I worked for her husband, same place, but I was a year older and was able then to drive the horses and to plow and cultivate, use the horse-drawn machinery and do a full farm-hand's work for eighteen dollars a month. (chuckles) Moved up the salary schedule.

Prior to that I had earned money. I had received five dollars a year for taking care of my father's church as a janitor, sweeping it and dusting it, building the fire in the furnace, heating it and keeping it clean and ready. So at the end of the year I was given five dollars for two consecutive years (laughter). So this is a very interesting thing. Besides attending Sunday School in the morning and then my father's preaching service, then in the evening going to Christian Endeavor, we had a full Sunday of worship.

M: Um hm. Was your father a very religious man?

F: Very religious. He was a fundamentalist--Southern Baptist --and very devout, very active, very winsome person and always had good congregations. They enjoyed his very straightforward preaching.

M: Were ministers in those days paid a salary?

F: Yes they were. The highest salary my father ever received was \$750 a year, but the house and land around it, and the members of the congregation were always giving us things like chickens or pigs that they would kill and bring in or vegetables and so forth, sorghum, molasses, things like that. It was a very interesting way of living.

M: Did you feel deprived at all?

F: Not at all. It wasn't much of a money economy. We had very good food, not too much meat, but we grew up well and I was always interested in athletics--athletically inclined, a three-letter man in college later.

When I finished high school at Stonington, I went to an academy called Shurtleff College up in Alton, Illinois and enjoyed that very much. Then later I went to Colgate University in Hamilton, New York and during the course of my college work, after junior year, I dropped out and was principal of a high school in Lewistown, Illinois and a very interesting school. I was not quite twenty-one when I started in. I became twenty-one the first year. I taught physics, chemistry, biology and agriculture and coached the teams there (Lynda chuckles), was principal--

administrative work.

M: Wow.

F: Those were days when you expected to work hard and enjoyed it and the pleasant relationships. Many warm friends to this day, those who are living, from that experience. It was a wonderful town, Lewistown. It was the county seat of Fulton County which included Chicago in the early days and people used to come from Chicago down to Lewistown to get their wedding licenses and [Abraham] Lincoln and [Senator Stephan A.] Douglas held two debates there on the square in the Civil War days. It was a staid, beautiful, quiet town--lovely people there.

Then I finished at Colgate. I had a senior year but I split that into two years because I taught chemistry and biology in the Colgate Academy for my college tuition for those two years.

M: Oh. Was that your major field, science?

F: Yes. Geology, as a matter of fact. We had an eminent geologist there at Colgate--Professor Gregory--and others, authorities, published many books. Colgate country is very interesting: moraine country, glaciated; finger lakes in New York state there--beautiful country, so I was very much interested in it. Came out here [to Hawaii] and one of the things I taught at Punahou was physiography. Used to take the classes on hikes up along the ridges and along the shorelines. Very much interested in it.

After graduating in 1912 from Colgate--I graduated Phi Beta Kappa--I was asked if I wouldn't want to go over to Peddie Institute in Hightstown, New Jersey and coach football and baseball and teach English so I went over there the fall of 1912. And that year we had a very successful football and baseball season. Enjoyed teaching, had charge of one of the boys' dormitories and I felt that I could use this capability and make a trip around the world before deciding just what I wanted to get into finally. So I wrote out here and got in touch with Punahou and President [Arthur Floyd] Griffiths made me an offer and I came on out.

Came out on the Siberia on which President Griffiths and his wife were returning to Hawaii.

M: You came out here first before you came to stay?

F: I came out here to stay.

M: Oh, I see. You just wrote to your president.

F: Yes, I had the offer and accepted, came on in the summer of 1913. I spent most of the summer after I got here surfing. (laughter) Dad Center made me a ten-foot, sixteen-inch wide, three-inch thick redwood surfboard so I did a lot of surfing every day there. And then got into the activities at Punahou, very busy teaching and coaching. Had charge of all the athletics. We never lost a championship while I was coaching up there--had quite a good record during those years--and I stayed there until World War I.

In 1916 I saw how things were going and I decided I would go at my own expense up to the Civilian Officers' Training School at Monterey, [California]. General Bell was in charge of it, the army conducting it, so I went up there and there were a thousand men and we were put through this very intensive course of training and I received a first lieutenant's commission--the only one. All the rest were second lieutenants' commissions. Sort of interesting.

I came back and started the R.O.T.C. [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] at Punahou. It was very well received by the people at Punahou and the boys seemed to like it. They dressed in white pants and shirts and sailor hats, white shoes. We had the R.O.T.C. start there. It was just military training then. It wasn't recognized by the army yet but the very first year, seeing what I was doing, a friendly captain who had a son at Punahou came up and helped me drill the boys and teach them military science. From then on, while I was up there, I had various army officers coming up to assist in that, just manuahi [free of charge] at that time. It was a very interesting experience.

During the 1916 anniversary, which was the 75th anniversary of Punahou, I had charge of the athletics and I wrote for the [news] papers all the account of the year's annual celebration for twenty-five cents an inch, which was much appreciated. (laughter)

M: What was your salary when you first came to Punahou, you remember?

F: I really don't remember. I think it was about two thousand [dollars] a year.

M: Did you live at the school too?

F: Yes, I had charge of the boys' dormitory, had a room in back there in what was then known as Rice Hall. Dole Hall was the dining hall and Castle Hall was the girls' boarding hall. Well, those were very rewarding days. I have often thought, although I enjoyed all forms of teaching, that my

very best and most effective teaching was on the athletic fields. Those like [Charles] Dudley Pratt and many of the leading men of this town were members of those teams and we've been very warm friends ever since. Quite interesting. Intimate type of experience you have with young fellows that way, trying to get them to put forth and do their best, challenging them all the time and their responding well. It was quite rewarding; pleasant.

So now I've been a trustee of Punahou for about thirty-five years, which has been a very interesting experience for me, as well as being a trustee of Kamehameha [Schools], which the trustees of the Bishop Estate are. They are trustees of the Kamehameha Schools too and they're trustees of the Bishop Museum. I'm now a senior trustee, have been for some years, since Mr. Collins left and went to the Campbell Estate. We rotate the offices. I became a trustee of the Bishop Estate in 1939. The next two replacements were in 1952. Judge Dinty Moore and Atherton Richards came in at that time. We've had several replacements since then.

This [biodata] says former government official. Of course my first service to the United States as an official was a captain of infantry when we were mustered into the federal service in World War I, June 1, 1917. We were all taken out to Schofield [Barracks] and we relieved the thirty-second infantry which went away to the mainland and on to Europe and I was taken away from my company and put in charge of the Officers' Training School at Schofield so I was in charge of that until the armistice.

M: So you were right at Schofield during the war, you didn't leave Hawaii.

F: No. I was in charge of the . . .

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

It notes here that I have a Ph. D. from Yale University, an A. B. from Colgate. After the war I came out of the service and decided I was going into business. I entered the firm of Lewers & Cooke, lumber and building materials here, and was moved around to different departments so that I'd learn the whole business, which was quite an opportunity under very good training of F. J. Lowrey and his son F. D. Lowrey and others. A very well, carefully-run firm, successful, and very excellent training, but when I had been there four and a half years and had been placed in charge of the other island business for Lewers & Cooke, a Mr. Williamson of Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts (laughter) came over and asked me if I wouldn't like to be the president of the Kamehameha Schools. Trus-

tees of the Bishop Estate had decided they would like to have me relieve Mr. Ernest C. Webster, father of General Ben Webster here in the National Guard. Ernest wanted to get back to New Haven and get into construction business so I accepted their very good offer and a very challenging thing. It was regarded as one of the important jobs of these islands and I accepted it with Mr. Lowrey's blessings because he thought it was important. They had talked to him about it before they saw me anyway.

I was president of Kamehameha Schools from 1923 to 1934--eleven years. The last year I spent away on sabbatical, getting my Ph.D. at Yale in education and there's very excellent educational seminars they had there--general seminar and certain special seminars--and they had excellent men conducting the seminars and brought back to them experienced persons who were heads of schools or heads of school systems--superintendents of schools and so forth. There's about a hundred of them there in those seminars. Excellent to get their experience and be with them. So I had my Ph.D. from Yale in 1935.

Well, during my stay in [New Haven] Dr. Homer Barnes was acting principal-in-charge, he was called. He was principal of the boys' school but they didn't have an acting president. He was called principal-in-charge and he kept that title. The trustees decided, on Dr. Barnes' advice, that we just be a small 250-student boarding school for boys and a 150-student boarding school for girls; no day students. Dr. Barnes had been a very successful boys' school head back in Cleveland, Ohio and he believed in a small boys' school--just turn out leaders only--and so he prevailed upon the trustees to change their plan from a school for fifteen hundred with the ability to expand, to just this small four hundred boarders. And so the boys' school was built in concrete for that many students. It's been a lot of trouble to us ever since because inevitably the revenues of this estate have been such that it would be impractical to confine them to such a small school. So it was a big mistake to do that and it's been giving us trouble ever since, adjusting the building around and remodeling and this-that-and-the-other thing.

But that is how I came to get my Ph.D. and I came back here and the trustees had decided they were not going to need a president so they informed me that they didn't need a president--they were going to have this small school--so I was given a year's salary and was excused. (both chuckle)

M: I wanted to ask you, how big was Kamehameha the year you left to go back to Yale?

F: It was small.

M: It was?

F: Yes. We had very few day students. It had been the policy all from the beginning. It was around 438 was the highest I think. Here are the enrollment figures of the school. In 1887 it started out with 37 boys; 112 the next year; 179. They got up to 300 in 1900 and 1923 when I came there it was 367. And 1924 Kamehameha graduated its first senior high school class, then the enrollment went up to over 400 and stayed over 400 until 1932 and that is when I went on to get my Ph.D. at Yale. Then it dropped down and stayed down under 400 until 1943. By that time, of course, I had come back here to Honolulu.

I was the treasurer of the Atherton Estate for several years and also in 1939 I was appointed a trustee of the Bishop Estate, being also then a trustee of the Kamehameha Schools and the Bishop Museum and the Charles R. Bishop Trust. The enrollment then in 1923 when I came just stayed right around 370.

M: That was all the grades together.

F: Yes. Well now, about 1932 we closed down what was called the preparatory school. It was a boarding preparatory school and it had had only about seventy-five students. It was closed down in 1932, the year I went away.

M: That was the lower grade part.

F: Yes. So as I say, Dr. Barnes wanted just a boys' school and a girls' school and didn't want that preparatory department, so it was closed down and the enrollment dropped from 447 down to 392, then to 344--around there. But in 1943 we had a lot of litigation and we were directed to reopen the school for the younger children, so we jumped from 326 enrollment to 687 by opening up the preparatory department for day students. Then it went on up over 763 in 1945. In 1950 it was over 1,100 so it kept on going up; 1200, 1288, 1300, 1500 in 1955. In 1960 it was 1759; over 2,000 in 1960 and 1961; 2,033 and 2,080 in 1963 and 1964. At present it's over 2580 so it's been growing. Day students have been the chief increases.

If you want to, ask any questions any time. I'm just looking at this thing.

M: Maybe you could talk a little bit, while we're on the Bishop Estate, about some of the experiences or some of the problems that you've coped with.

F: Well, I had decided when I came out here to go around the world. I didn't speak to you about that, did I?

M: You mentioned that when you left school you were thinking of coming.

F: Yes, going around the world. So I got here and I had an engagement to go to Roberts College in Constantinople. After two years I was planning to go there and had been corresponding and had intended to go out there but I liked it so well here, got so busy, I never left. Never got to Roberts College until 1951 when we took our daughter, after she graduated from Sarah Lawrence [College], around the world as a graduation present so we called at Roberts College at that time. So I never went there to teach but stayed right on here because I liked Hawaii so much and the people so much and the first thing I knew I was in the World War I as a captain of infantry.

After I came back here, in addition to being the treasurer of the J. B. Atherton Estate, I had the same position with the Juliette M. Atherton Trust, charitable trust still existing, and was called upon to investigate all requests for financial assistance and so forth. That was a very interesting thing to learn about--charities--and I enjoyed that very much. [He returned in 1934.]

I came back and then, not being president of the Kamehameha Schools, I started to organize community associations which I felt were very important. I'd seen one on the mainland. I organized the first one at Waialua where my brother was the manager and it was the start of community associations here. We had a lot of interesting experiences. People took to it well. The Juliette M. Atherton Trust put up a big building--gymnasium and meeting hall--and we had a good program and also started a pre-school day school for little children there. The people in the community paid for that; paid tuitions to pay a very good teacher. Miss Elizabeth M. Collins was an outstanding leader in that field and we had her working away there and it's been a wonderful influence in Waialua ever since. She's gone now--passed away--but during the following summer the university asked me if I wouldn't put on a course at the university and teach those who might want to learn about the community associations. So I went up there and we had an enrollment in that class of over 250 teachers.

M: My gosh.

F: It was an interesting course. They really enjoyed it, talked about it, and ever since that there's been a tendency to form community associations wherever there's a community here in Hawaii.

M: Um hm. Yeh, there are a lot.

F: There's hardly a community now that doesn't have an organized community association. Well that was the beginning of it. I started the next one at Wahiawa, next one at Aiea, then the next one on the other side of the island at Kaneohe and first thing we knew all the windward side had its community associations and they formed themselves into a council for the windward side too. I also started one on the Big Island, one on Kauai and one on Molokai.

M: How would you go about it? I'm just curious.

F: Well, I talked to a person here and a person there and explained what the benefits were, that people should be organized to be sure they had good objectives and good programs and work together and unite themselves to do things, including the appeal to the politicians--legislators. It's a very effective way to get your voice heard; get a strong organization of voters. Although it didn't appear to be political, yet, with that many people interested earnestly in themselves and the improvement of their families and their community, well, it had an effect, which was natural.

The man in charge of military training for some years at Kamehameha was Captain Thomas E. May. He was an outstanding athlete at Oregon State and alumni director for awhile. He was captain of military science and tactics and a very close friend of Douglas McKay who was the governor of Oregon. When President Eisenhower was selecting his Cabinet he asked Douglas McKay to be his Secretary of Interior. So President Eisenhower took a number of his Cabinet--I guess his real leaders--to Japan, Korea, on that trip to look over the situation in Asia and Douglas McKay was along and Douglas McKay was a very good friend of Captain Thomas E. May--close friend--so I got well acquainted with Douglas McKay. [Captain T.E. May, U.S. Army]

I'd met him before when he was out here with the Willamette [University] football team. He came down with them and they played the University of Hawaii and then Douglas and the team were caught here on December the 7th, 1941. And they turned in and went out to Pearl Harbor--all of them--and helped bury the dead and take care of the wounded and crippled and fight fires. Very wonderful record they made out there. He became governor of Oregon later and Secretary of Interior. But he came back--a bunch of us were out there--they came in on the Indianapolis, Admiral [Arthur W.] Radford's guests. He'd joined them at Iwo Jima and gone along on the trip with them with the President. Secretary [Charles E.] Wilson of Defense, Secretary [John Foster] Dulles and Admiral Radford were in one quonset hut there at Iwo Jima and they got very closely acquainted.

I was out there with a group of local people to meet the President and the first thing I knew, "Why Frank!" Doug McKay came down the line. He was Secretary of Interior but I hadn't connected the two (laughter). And he shook hands and we had a good time while he was on that stay and he asked me if I wouldn't like to be the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. I had experience here and in Samoa and the chairman of the Barstow Foundation for American Samoans down there since 1932 and I told him I would do it if it didn't interfere with my Bishop Estate responsibilities. I couldn't give them up. Well, the President said that would be all right, I could keep them if I would renounce my commissions completely, not have another source of income. He didn't want any conflicts of interest that way. So I gladly did that for the President and he appointed me the High Commissioner of the Trust Territory and I served in that capacity as long as the headquarters were here in Honolulu but I wanted the headquarters moved back into the Trust Territory. They decided, however, they would move them back to Guam. I didn't like that. I thought they ought to be in the Trust Territory but nevertheless they moved them back, at which time I gave up my service and returned to the Bishop Estate here. But it was a very interesting experience.

Actually, at the request of the Reader's Digest I've written a book on the subject, We Have Kept Our Trust, but then when I wrote it I wondered if we had and I decided I couldn't present it unless I'd had a chance to go out and check it. Well, it would take about six or eight weeks to do that, to go around to see what the result is, you know. I haven't had that kind of time to do it since I got the manuscript written. Sometime maybe I'll get to take a trip and, by the way, this is off the record. (recorder is turned off and on again)

M: I wanted to ask you, what is this Samoan Foundation?

F: Well, that was very sad really. It's an interesting story actually. I was seated in my office out at the Kamehameha Schools one day when I looked out in the outer office and saw two people, the most dejected people I've ever seen. They were just patently gone and they looked like very fine people, so I arranged my schedule and asked them to come in. They came in and sat down and I told them how happy I was to see them, Mr. and Mrs. William S. Barstow--he had given me his card--and I hoped they were enjoying Hawaii. Pretty soon his wife said, "Our son's dead." The father said, "He died last night." He was their only son. They were very wealthy people, boyhood friend of Thomas Edison and others. He was vice-president of the General Electric,

president of Associated Gas and Electric, a tremendously wealthy person and grand man, a philanthropist. He and his wife were philanthropists as well as outstanding, leading business people.

I was trying to find something to say and tell them how sorry I was and fumbling around because I was just shocked. He was their only son. They had counted on him to succeed them. He had been injured by gas in World War I, had been sent up to take charge, while recuperating, of a fox farm in Vermont at Chittenden near the silver fox farm and was very successful but he wasn't recovering very well up there. The weather didn't agree with him. The doctor recommended that he go down to the South Seas--moderate climate. He went down there with a friend, got to taking pictures. He took a motion picture, he wrote the libretto [or script] and we have it now at the Bishop Museum on the Virgin of Ta'u. It's quite an interesting story he's written up there. It's a documentary film. It shows the life of the ancient Samoans.

And so they said their son had wanted them to come to Samoa because he wanted them to assist him in doing something for the American Samoans. He wanted them to come down and see the place. Well, they didn't want to go down there but they met him here [in Hawaii] and were going to make arrangements and talk the thing over. But for a few days they were flying around seeing this beautiful place and having a wonderful time with their son when, on Sunday, he complained of a sore throat and they called in Dr. Winn, the house physician. Dr. Winn gave him something and told him to gargle and so forth. Well, his resistance must have been low. At any rate, this proved to be a [streptococcus]. He had a strep sore throat and it attacked his heart. And two a.m. Thursday morning, the day when they came out to my office, Mr. Barstow had heard a noise out in the hall and he went out to see what was going on and they were wheeling his son's body away--the undertaker and the doctor--without having let the parents know their son had passed away. Well, they were just simply wrecked. [They stayed at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.]

I tried to tell them how sorry I was, wanted to know what I could do, and they said he had mentioned the Kamehameha Schools. That's all they had talked business about but he had mentioned the Kamehameha Schools and thought that would be fine if they could have something like Kamehameha Schools in Samoa and they'd come out to see me about it. It occurred to me that that might be a chance to perpetuate the son's memory if they'd set up a foundation. We could get competent persons as a committee to draw up a deed of trust, the specifications, and act as a continuing committee. Well, they sat right up on their chairs right away. They were quite accustomed to charities. That was

something that sounded good to them. They could perpetuate their son's memory and life.

So I got Mr. Albert Judd, an attorney and a trustee of the Bishop Estate here, and we went out to see them in the afternoon and talked about it, then talked about the items that should be in a deed of trust. And so, Mr. Judd was asked to draw up the deed of trust and send it back to them so they could talk it over with their attorneys in New York. That was done and with some modifications they gave us the deed of trust and asked us to go ahead, to go down there first, so a group of us went down there--Governor and Mrs. [Walter Francis] Frear, Albert Judd and his son Albert, Jack [John Thomas] Waterhouse, my wife and myself, the president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund and his daughter and secretary. We went down there and spent five weeks making trips to all the villages and talking with the chiefs and asking what would be the best thing to do in education for them. They were very wise and helpful and we decided we would start the Feleti School--Frederic Barstow School [Feleti being Samoan for Frederic]--for fifty selected boys, boarders, train them so that they would be competent to be chiefs in a changing world; a changing society. [Albert Francis Judd]

So that went on very successfully until World War II, then our school plant was occupied by the Marines. After the war we went down to discuss what the people would like and they wanted then a modern American high school, wanted us to assist them to get a modern American high school, which we did. Gave up the specific school for chiefs and we've been helping them ever since one way or another, bringing nurses up here to be trained, or agriculturists, helping them down there with the teachers' training school --the Feleti School for training teachers.

END OF SIDE 2/1ST TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

One of my assignments from the federal government was membership on the U.S. [United States] Loyalty Review Board. Did you ever hear of that during World War II?

M: Yeh, vaguely. I wasn't very aware of it at that time.

F: Well, the Loyalty Review Board was a very secret thing and they set up a little branch of it out here. I was made chairman of it and it was to interview and review suspicious characters as to their loyalty to the United States.

M: How did you go about deciding who was suspicious? (chuckles)

F: Well, the FBI really told us about them. We made the investigation and we didn't find too many but it was an interesting thing. A very responsible thing, you know, to have to check up on the loyalty of a person. It's to a considerable extent a matter of opinion.

M: Yeh.

F: In connection with that, later when I was High Commissioner, they revised the Loyalty Review Board and reactivated it and looked at some people out in the Trust Territory. They looked them over. I wasn't aware of it. Then having done that they decided that there were four people that should be dismissed and they directed me to go personally and talk it over with them and let them know that they were dismissed.

M: These were people employed by the government.

F: Yes, they were on duty out in the Trust Territory. My employees. So I had to go out and make a trip amongst other things--other duties--to break the news to these people. Well, it didn't go over very well, naturally. However, three of them felt that they would take it and one of them didn't. One of them appealed and his appeal was sustained by the Congress. He went directly to the senators and so forth and he was given his job back. The other three, though, were not, except for one who was given his job back many years later. So that was sort of an interesting thing, by way of protecting the country from disloyal persons.

M: I gather that disloyal meant in a sense that you were collaborating with a foreign government or something like that?

F: Yes, yes. Or his conduct was such, in the case of one, that he could be forced to give information. He could be held up.

Well, there's one other thing here I notice. I was the one who really organized the Pacific War Memorial Commission here when I was the president of the Chamber of Commerce during World War II. 1943 was my year as president of the Chamber of Commerce. I realized that there was going to be all sorts of ideas coming into the Chamber because they began coming in for memorials, one sort or another, so I thought we'd better organize so that the Chamber could act as a clearing house for discussing these different suggestions.

So we formed the Pacific War Memorial Commission and got in touch with General [George Catlett] Marshall, who

was chairman at that time of the American Battle Monuments Commission and I went and discussed things with the general back there in Washington and we got all the ideas together. Got people interested, like Mrs. Dillingham who had lost a son; Tucker Gratz who was in Commerce, and a number of other people--oh, a good-sized group for the Pacific War Memorial Commission--and decided on the things that we thought would be good memorials. Of course, one of the chief ones was the Battle Monuments Commission at Punchbowl. Another was a memorial highway from Pearl Harbor in to Honolulu. [Mrs. Walter Francis Dillingham]

M: Is that Nimitz?

F: Nimitz Highway, yes. It hasn't been completed yet. It looks like a honky-tonk way. (laughter) But we did organize so that we had this group here to work with the American Battle Monuments Commission and federal funds were available and that was one of my contributions to start the thing off.

M: Were you involved in the Arizona Memorial?

F: Yes, that is one of them. We were working with the navy and the navy picked that right up but that is one of the coordinated expressions of the war memorials.

I was chairman of the Full Employment Committee after World War II, appointed by the governor--Governor [Ingram Macklin] Stainback. After World War II things went downhill economically. There wasn't work around here, the military was cutting back and thousands and thousands of people left here and went back home to the mainland and Hawaii just took a nose dive economically. So we had a lot of unemployed around here and what to do? The governor appointed me chairman, I formed this commission and we studied the whole thing. A book has been written describing that.

It was my concept that our government needed to attend to its Far Eastern defenses because we had a fleet out there with no air cover, no carriers at all, so that if they should see a Russian submarine all they could do was run. And we had no place to take care of our ships in Guam or forward areas and so I talked it over with Admiral Radford, who was the CINCPAC at the time, and he said, "Yes, this would be a good time for you to go back. It happens that I am not in particularly good standing back there." (Lynda chuckles) They had sent him out here but he was due to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs at that time so the Secretary of Defense gave him this banishing assignment. He arranged for me to see the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary Matthews, and I went back and had a conference

with Secretary Matthews and Admiral Forrest [P.] Sherman. I'll give you a paper describing that, if I may, without taking so much time to do it now. It's an interesting paper I wrote for the record because I was sent on around to different people and had a heck of a time but got to the President. (Lynda laughs)

In about a month's time the Boxer was out here and that's when they started to build up the defenses in the Pacific after World War II, to get Guam ready and Midway and the testing sites and so forth. All that started from that and it was quite important and it took care of our employment because many a thousand people were soon employed out there, working. (long pause)

To tell about my interest in the Chamber of Commerce, I was serving the Chamber of Commerce hour upon hour upon hour, working up through the committees to the second vice-president, the first vice-president, and the presidency in 1943, which was during the war and it was a heck of a time to be president of the Chamber of Commerce. (laughter) It was a job. We had all kinds of problems.

M: What sort of things?

F: Well, we needed housing, we had no money, our economy was at a low ebb then, of course. You couldn't build any houses in 1943 and we had all these people here and we had problems with boys--rowdies--and I took the lead in forming what was known as the Kokua Council. It was composed of the leading business and professional men, the officials of the county and the state, and the military leaders. Kokua Council. We all got together and went to work to solve that problem of the rowdies beating up on the military here. We brought that up, got the courts to cooperate and the police department, the military, and did a lot of personal work amongst the leaders of the young men. That was the Kokua Council and it had many other assignments: keeping Fort DeRussy open space. Kokua Council assisted the army in holding onto that land, otherwise it would all have been covered with high rise apartments--all of Fort DeRussy--but that's one of the fine things that the army has done and we helped them to do it, to hang on to that so it's a lot of open space there in the Fort DeRussy area. It's about all that's left.

M: Yeh. (long pause)

F: Royal Danish Consul of Honolulu. I was appointed the Royal Danish Consul to succeed Mr. Robert Booth when he passed away. Ambassador Kaufman in Washington had looked over the field. I don't know how they did it but I received a letter from him asking me if I would be willing

to serve as Royal Danish Honorary Consul here. I'm not a Dane. As I say, the Schapings were Danes, where I worked on the farm those two years, and there was an adjacent community which was Danish pioneers so I had a very high regard for the Danish people and I was happy to take that assignment. It led to quite a lot of dealing with Danish seamen especially but also with Prince Axel, brother of the king, who is the president of the East Asiatic Corporation, a line of ships coming through here and all through Asia. He called and was in our home at different times. His wife and her niece who was the Countess of Luxembourg.

M: This was the brother, now, of the king then.

F: Yes, brother of the king. The king was the one who gave me the commission at the recommendation of Ambassador Kaufman. During this period of ten years when I was the Royal Danish Consul, I had to give it up for the two years I was the High Commissioner because no one with the federal employment can have a foreign title. You had to just lay it aside so I had to give that up. And then after I was relieved of the High Commissioner's job and the thing moved away from here, I was asked to take this again which I held until I became seventy years of age, at which time Ambassador Kaufman and I both had to give up the foreign service of Denmark and I had him out here as my guest for six weeks. He enjoyed it very much. Wonderful man.

So I had that post and we entertained Prince Axel, also his wife, Princess Margaretha, and the Countess of Luxembourg. She was, by the way, threatened with a miscarriage here. They were on their way down to Australia to join Prince Axel in the Olympics and so my wife had her doctor take charge and watch over her while she was here a week and things squared away and she went on down. When she got back to Luxembourg she had a pair of twins. (Lyn-da laughs) So we always get Christmas cards from Princess Margaretha and the Countess of Luxembourg. She's now the Empress of Luxembourg. I guess it was that type of experience that we had with the royal family that caused the king to give me a knighthood, the Knight of Donnebrog [or Danneberg]. That's the name of the Danish flag, Donnebrog. D-O-N-N-E-B-R-O-G. Donnebrog, they pronounce it. So I have been knighted by the King of Denmark, a very high honor. (long pause)

The Social Science Association, which is about ninety years old, I was the secretary of that for seven or eight years, followed by being president of it one year. I'm still a member of it, the oldest member now.

Now do you think of anything else that you have in mind?

M: My goodness, you're older than I thought you were.

F: I'll be eighty-four in November. Eighty-four.

M: My, your memory's marvelous.

F: I hike up and down the country club hills twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays. I don't use a cart if I can avoid it and it keeps me in pretty good shape. When I have a caddy, fine; if not, I take a light bag and carry it.

M: Wow.

F: I have to do it. I think I would soften up pretty fast at this age if I didn't exercise and I like to exercise. I've always been in need of exercise. If I eat too much I'd have to get out and play tennis or hike up Tantalus or run right down the street. Do something. (laughter) Just have to do it. Go swimming a mile. So I have had that physical requirement for exercise and my weight is the same now as it was when I completed college--172 pounds.

M: My gosh. Not many people can say that.

F: However, I had a thirty-two inch waist then and I have a thirty-six inch waist now (laughter) and not so much up around here.

M: It sort of goes downhill, doesn't it? (laughter)

F: Yes, that's right.

M: I wanted to ask you how you met your wife. I don't know anything about that.

F: Oh yes, well, one day I was on a ship, the old Mauna Kea, going to the Big Island to spend some time with a couple of the Punahou boys and to see the sister of one of the boys. On that ship that day, Ruth Richards was going to Maui and I saw her, very much attracted to her immediately, and accompanied her ashore in one of the whale boats and came on back and went on to the Big Island. But the next time I saw her I immediately again reestablished my interest and that was out at the Outrigger [Canoe Club], the second time I saw her. So I developed a very deep fondness . . .

M: Let's see, how old were you when you got married?

F: Thirty and she was twenty-three.

M: So you were ready to settle down.

F: Yes. That was one of the reasons I never left here, of course, because we had such a pleasant relationship. We lost our first little girl, Mary Wilson. She was a lovely child but she had undiagnosed diphtheria at age three. We had been taking milk from a dairy up in Manoa and the milk wasn't pasteurized and one of the hands up there was a carrier of diphtheria. When our child came down, they began checking to find the source and they found this man and then they notified everybody to pasteurize the milk and that probably saved a lot of lives.

A little later I became a member of the Board of Health under Dr. Trotter and served as a member of the Board of Health for seven years. One of the things I did, besides having charge of the Kaneohe Hospital for the mentally ill as committeeman in charge of it, was to get a law passed requiring the immunization of all babies against diphtheria. It was not an easy thing to get that law passed at that time. The Speaker of the House was a Christian Scientist and he didn't believe in immunization or anything like that and he bitterly opposed it but the evidence was so strong and the reaction of the parents was so strong that the law was established. Now the doctor never sees a case of diphtheria here any more, so that is quite something.

In Ruth's passing, she apparently was lighting a match. She had just had visitors that day--two sets. Admiral and Mrs. Solomon had just left. I was on my way down to have supper with her Sunday evening [June 27, 1971]. She apparently had struck a match and apparently the whole thing had exploded and caught her gown, which was a brand new gown she got just to go in there for this test period, and it was highly flammable. It just exploded and burned, clinging to her. When I got down there a few minutes later the room was full of firemen. I said, "What? Isn't this 311, my wife's room?" "Yes." Then they took me aside and told me about the fire and Ruth was up in intensive care then. She had been burned though, far beyond any chance of recovery. She passed away just two hours before our fifty-fourth wedding anniversary on June the 29th. Very, very terrible. [The Edward Solomons]

M: I'll say.

F: It seems impossible to believe it.

M: Um hm.

F: We took steps to try to get the hospitals to permit no smoking unless under supervision because people in bed

smoking, especially if they're sick and maybe nervous, run a considerable risk unless they're supervised. I hope that will be established. Doctors, I think, are willing to go along. Most of them. Some of them are not. But I believe that the hospitals probably are getting that rule into effect now and may save a number of lives, just as our first loss of our first little girl has saved probably hundreds of lives from diphtheria.

M: Maybe they'll do something about these flammable fabrics too. I've been hearing a lot about that.

F: Yes. Yes, I know. I know. This firm where she bought this immediately took from their shelves all these things, robes and like that.

M: Um hm.

F: And the hospitals can check on that sort of business too--the people coming in. If they don't bring nonflammable things, they'll have to wear hospital robes.

M: Yeh.

F: Well, I've touched on some high spots and maybe if. . . . You're going to have this typed up?

M: Yes. Right now I'm recording--interviewing--and I'm not doing any writing because I'm trying to get the interviews done.

F: Yes. I'm going to Washington Tuesday--Defense Orientation Conference Association meeting and annual meeting--and then I am going to visit some additional museums and members of my family. Science Centers, which is on the dock--et for our Bishop Museum, to be the basis of a Science Center. (Counter at 366)

END OF INTERVIEW

Re-transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

Edited by Frank E. and Robert R. Midkiff, 1981

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT R. MIDKIFF

President, American Trust of Hawaii, Incorporated

November 2, 1971

M: Okay.

R: Start again?

M: Yeh, it's going. (chuckles)

R: In 1933 Dad, Frank E. Midkiff, had a sabbatical year's leave from the Kamehameha Schools where he was president and being in the Depression, why, the family had just enough money to go back and rent an apartment in New Haven where he was going to be working to get his Ph.D. in education, since he felt this was necessary to continue his career in education.

On the way east, Dad was appointed as a delegate to the biennial conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations which was held in Banff, Canada. And so we picked up a new LaSalle in Vancouver and drove up the river out of Vancouver, camping by night until we put the car on the train in Jasper to get into Lake Louise and Banff. We arrived at the conference. I was thirteen years old and I remember watching the bears and canoeing on the Bow River and that type of thing while Dad was busy with all the sessions.

The day we were to leave, my sister Betty broke out with chicken pox which meant that we were quarantined in the room for an extra ten days at at least fifty dollars a day. That was an astronomical figure for a Depression family. We also had with us a Japanese maid who had been with us for many, many years--Masayo Sakoeki--and so we had three rooms at this incredible figure. There was nothing to be done except that it cut into the savings to meet this expense.

We then continued across the continent, down through Glacier Park and arrived eventually in New Haven where Dad enrolled at Yale, New York University, and Columbia University simultaneously in order to get all the necessary credits.

M: Three different schools?

R: Yes, three colleges. (Lynda chuckles)

M: How did he get away with that?

R: Well, he had good friends. The head of the education department at Yale was very anxious to help him out. A man named Day, I believe. And so he would commute to New York and back to New Haven doing his homework. He also had to pass the language requirements. I'm sure he'd had German when he was in college but I don't believe he'd had French so he had to learn French and German, both of which were necessary to get a degree in education. With tremendous labors he completed all these requirements, did everything but his thesis which he came back to write. His thesis was on rural education in Hawaii to that time, specifically in Waialua community, which he worked on with the help of his brother John who was then assistant manager of Waialua Plantation.

But in the meantime there had been some active politicking at Kamehameha Schools and the principal of the boys' school had persuaded one of the chief trustees that because Dad didn't have a Ph.D. and he did, it would be appropriate to replace him, so he was let out of his job in the middle of the Depression while he was working on his Ph.D. This again was quite a blow to the family budget. He came back and went to work as assistant secretary of the J. B. Atherton Estate and the Juliette M. Atherton Trust which was then operated as a family corporation. [See page 11] Then Dad finished up his thesis as a project for the Juliette Atherton Trust.

M: Hmm. Well, that's very interesting. (recorder is turned off and on again)

R: In 1939 while Dad was assistant executive of the Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu, we planned another summer trip. I was a sophomore at Yale and we were scheduled to leave in July or June on another conference. This was a shipboard trip. I think it was the World Health Organization was having a conference on board the Rotterdam which was to go down the East Coast and back up again. I got a letter from Honolulu stating that the date of arrival in New York was delayed because Dad had been appointed and was to be sworn in as trustee of the Bishop Estate. I had the opportunity to stay with his sister who was a schoolteacher in Flushing, Long Island. I visited the New York World's Fair every day for two weeks and became the world's greatest authority on the fair. (laughter) While on this trip to South America and when we were somewhere in between Caracas and Pernambuco, Betty came down with the mumps and went to great lengths to disguise her condition so as not to be thrown off the boat. (laughter)

M: You mean wrapping things around her neck?

R: Yeh. (recorder is turned off and on again) We lived on the Kamehameha School campus from 1927 until 1933 in the big house which is right next to the planetarium. This was the president's campus. It had some marvelous climbing trees in front of it--a big old baobab and a banyan. I was seven years old when we moved out there, became great friends with the classes of 1927--all those years, 1929 and 1930 in particular.

I remember the family had purchased a new LaSalle and somehow or other Dad or Mother indicated they didn't particularly like the color but it was the best they could do. I found a can of paint that seemed to be a more attractive color so I commenced to paint the car, had it partially finished before it was discovered. (laughter)

Another time the car was parked on the little hill and I was pretending to drive it and let off the hand brake. Fortunately some of the boys came out of Dormitory A and saw the car careening down across the campus and ran along and jumped on the running board and pulled the brake on. (Lynda laughs)

It's a very delightful life on a boys' campus and many, many friends--Ainsley Mahikoa and others--who were students at that time and I've kept close contact with ever since. (recorder turned off and on again)

We always had a horse which we kept up at the dairy where the boys learned dairying. It was on the corner right across from the Kamehameha Shopping Center. I didn't ride the horse often enough and he'd get awful fat and sassy. I remember one horse was named Princess. One day I was riding between the Bishop Museum and Bishop Hall and sought to encourage its favor by collecting some kiawe beans for it to eat. The campus was laden with kiawe trees. I was leaning down to collect them and the horse calmly pushed me aside with its left front paw, held its paw on my back and ate up all the kiawe beans in sight. (laughter) Finally the boys came and liberated me from underneath this sassy horse. (Counter at 99)

END OF INTERVIEW

Re-transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

Edited by Robert Richards Midkiff, 1981

BIODATA

I was asked to prepare some data that in my opinion would be justification for my selection as Father of the Year. I am very much afraid that I cannot justify such a selection but some of the suggested data I present as follows:

I have never looked upon myself as any particularly qualified "father" as compared with many other men whom I might mention. The role I have played seems to me to have been more of the Big Brother than the Father.

I rather believe that what we are today is due much to the start given us in our infancy and earliest years by our parents and our homes. I had a wonderful father and mother, both Kentucky born and bred. Both spent some years in teaching school, then my father became a minister. We were brought up to respect the rights of everyone else regardless of race or creed. I am sure that such parental love and discipline go far toward moulding the character of our entire lives. Let us be grateful for a good start and for being "born right the first time."

I will be age seventy-seven on my next birthday, which is November 15, 1964. I came to the Islands in 1913, fifty-one years ago, having graduated in 1912 from Colgate University and having spent a year at Peddie Institute as a teacher of English and coach of football and baseball. During my college course, I had dropped out for two years to serve as principal and science teacher in Lewistown (Illinois) High School. This was to earn money to continue in college.

I had secured a position with Punahou School, then known as Oahu College, as a teacher of English, mathematics, and physiography, and teacher in charge of boys' athletics. I coached football, basketball, baseball and track. I also was the dormitory master for the boys boarding in Dole Hall.

I had intended to proceed on to Robert's College in Constantinople after teaching a few years at Punahou but because I liked Hawaii so much I stayed on and in 1917 was married to Ruth Richards. I never reached Constantinople, now known as Istanbul, until 1951 when Mrs. Midkiff and our daughter Betty and I took a trip around the world.

We have three children of our own--Mary Wilson, Robert Richards and Frances Elizabeth. Our first daughter died at the age of three with an undiagnosed case of diphtheria. Because of this tragedy, when later I became a member of the Board of Health I worked arduously and against very considerable organized opposition to have a law passed which would require immunization of infants against the dread disease of diphtheria. Since this law was passed our present population hardly ever sees a case of diphtheria in this state.

Possibly this is one accomplishment based on the loss of our daughter that would qualify me as having a paternal interest in all children.

Mrs. Midkiff and I have nine grandchildren, our son Bob having three daughters and two sons, and our daughter Betty having three daughters and one son.

For many years in Hawaii, beginning in 1913, I had very close contact with the young people of Punahou and feel that through my contact with them in class and on the fields of athletics I was able to do for them many of the things that a good teacher is expected to do. Many of these people now are leaders in the business and professional life of our state and it is a great pleasure to recall the pleasant days we had together prior to World War I.

While at Punahou I took an interest in Y.M.C.A. work and was the founder of the first Hi-Y group at Punahou and its leader for some years. At that time I also served as superintendent of the high school-group Sunday School of Central Union Church and taught a class of high school girls. At a later time I taught a class of teen-age boys at Central Union Church Sunday School. This group included my own son Bob as well as a number of other young fellows who now are amongst the leaders of our city. Later on I served for many years in various capacities in the Y.M.C.A., including chairman of the Management Committee of Central Y.M.C.A.

In 1916 I felt that world conditions were becoming serious and I also recognized a certain need for training amongst the Punahou boys that could be met by the Reserve Officers Training Corps. Accordingly, at my own expense during the summer of 1916, I went to the citizens' military training camp at Monterey, California to become indoctrinated and qualify myself in military affairs. I was awarded a first lieutenant's commission in that organization. I returned to Honolulu and organized the ROTC at Punahou and conducted it myself until voluntary assistance from army officer fathers was obtained. Amongst the voluntary assistants were Captain L. W. Hunt and Captain Edward A. Massie, who later was a colonel in the Judge Advocate's Corps and after retirement a judge in one of our district courts. Soon after the federal government accepted this group into the federal ROTC program and supplied commissioned officers and enlisted men to carry on the work.

During World War I, I entered the service with a company of national guardsmen. During the year 1917 I had joined the National Guard and had been commissioned a first lieutenant and athletic officer and aide to the Adjutant General, Brigadier General Samuel I. Johnson. As athletic officer I coached, called signals for, and captained the Hawaii National Guard football team. This team defeated the University of Hawaii, the Town Team, and all other military teams in Hawaii in the fall of 1917.

I assisted in organizing the first company of American citizens of Japanese ancestry--Company D of the Hawaii National Guard. The young men of this company proved to be outstanding officers and men and amongst them were many able leaders, including Chief Justice Wilfred Tsukiyama of the State Supreme Court. I entered the federal service as a Captain of Infantry, served as Officer-in-Charge of Officers Training School [at Schofield Barracks] until the armistice, then as Post Adjutant until my honorable discharge.

After World War I the members of this Company D organization wished to retain their status as honorably discharged members of the United States Army and for this purpose I accepted the chairmanship of the Americanization Committee. I was one of the founders and a charter member of the American Legion in Hawaii. As chairman of the Department of Hawaii Americanization Committee, I aided in the formation of the Society of American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry. This group was very active in an Americanization program and was influential in affecting the loyal attitude toward the United States amongst the young people of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii.

After my service in World War I, I joined the firm of Lewers and Cooke, Limited and was rotated through the various departments in this building materials firm, learning the business. However, in 1923 the trustees of the Bishop Estate asked me to become president of the Kamehameha Schools. I regarded this as an opportunity and served in this capacity for ten years.

I think it may be said that in this position I served in loco parentis for hundreds of Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian boys and girls at the Kamehameha Schools. This also is service highly prized by me at all times and I have very fond continuing friendships established during those years.

Throughout the fifty-one years I have been in Hawaii, I have taken my turn as chairman or member of scores of committees, commissions and community projects. One unusual opportunity arose in connection with the death of young Frederic Duclos Barstow, a very wealthy young man who was sent to American Samoa for his health, who passed away in Honolulu, and in whose memory his parents established the Frederic Duclos Barstow Foundation for American Samoans. The creation of this foundation was at my suggestion when the parents called upon me at the Kamehameha Schools the morning after their son suddenly had passed away.

Frederic had mentioned to them the Kamehameha Schools as being the kind of school he would like to see in Samoa. This foundation has carried on a program conserving the good of the old in Samoa and building into it the best of western culture. It is what Dr. Peter Buck, who was for some years a member of the foundation, described as "bi-cultural education." The objective was to develop Samoans into leaders

who not only could carry on the good customs of the old but in all fields could serve their people, adjusting as rapidly as necessary to modern western ways. This foundation, though a small one, has been quite influential in training young people and continues to support the Frederic Duclos Barstow Memorial Teacher Training School in Tutuila.

The chiefs graciously conferred upon me the chiefly title Ao'e'e. Also they erected a new elementary school in Leone, naming it the Frank E. Midkiff-Leone School.

Subsequent to serving as president of the Kamehameha Schools, I became trustee of the Bishop Estate. These trustees, of course, are responsible for the corpus of the estate, including 370,000 acres of land and the buildings and campus of the Kamehameha Schools and for setting the policies in keeping with the Will of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop. She directed that her schools were to carry on programs that would turn out "good and industrious men and women," able to hold their own in the changing circumstances through which they would pass. The estate, as managed by the trustees, provides funds to operate the Kamehameha Schools and all students in fact are beneficiaries to a very large extent of the income of this estate. Some students require full financial aid, not only for tuition and board but for other items of expense throughout their school year, but all at the present time pay only a relatively small percentage of the cost of their education and are therefore scholarship beneficiaries of this trust.

Also, subsequent to my services as president of the Kamehameha Schools, I was elected by the trustees of Punahou School to be a trustee of the school in which I had taught upon my first arrival in the Islands. It has been a great honor and pleasure to have this relationship. Amongst the trustees of Punahou some have been former students of mine in earlier years in that institution.

I have enjoyed the opportunity of serving my turn as chairman of various committees and as officer, including the presidency, of the Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu. Serving in this organization, I have been chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, the Public Health Advisory Committee and the Civilian Affairs Committee of the Chamber. I attach great importance to the opportunity to serve as chairman of the Military Affairs Committee during which time I was responsible for the organization of the Kokua Council of the Chamber of Commerce, an organization of military and civilian officials as well as leading business and professional men united together to deal with problems arising between the military and the civilian community. [Kokua: help]

While a member of the Chamber's Public Health Committee, I was instrumental in bringing Professor Ira Hiscock from Yale University to make repeated surveys of the health conditions of Hawaii and to set higher and higher standards of

health for our state. I also was instrumental in securing Dr. Franklin G. Ebaugh to come from Denver to make a survey of the mental health conditions of the state and Dr. Douglas to come from Detroit to make a survey of tuberculosis conditions and needs in the state. At this time I was a member of the Board of Health and the relationship between the Board of Health and the Public Health Committee of the Chamber of Commerce was a close and effective one. While a member of the Board of Health in those days, I was chairman of the institutions committee which supervised the Territorial Hospital for the mentally ill.

At a later time I served as a trustee of the Kuakini Hospital and was chairman of their first fund drive which was very successful, and also chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. It was a great opportunity to serve this excellent hospital which continues to render outstanding medical and surgical services at quite reasonable rates to the people of our state.

While I served as the chairman of the Community Affairs Committee and during my presidency of the Chamber of Commerce and subsequent thereto, I was quite active and interested in matters such as urban redevelopment, slum clearance, the provision of arterials and the system of highways, the improvement of Waikiki Beach, city beautification, et cetera. Under the Chamber of Commerce, I took the lead in forming and was one of the members of the Pacific War Memorial Commission.

I was a member of the Federal Loyalty Review Board. In O.C.D. during World War II, I was in charge of civilian and dependents evacuation. [O.C.D.: Office of Civilian Defense]

In 1949, after World War II, there was a tremendous letdown in defense activities in the Pacific. This had very serious results in employment in Hawaii. I was appointed by the governor as chairman of a Full Employment Commission. This commission, with outstanding leaders of the business community and of labor, worked together to recommend and bring to pass new employment opportunities. In our studies in this connection, it was concluded that there was a growing requirement for increased defense activity in the Pacific. It became my responsibility and opportunity to proceed to Washington to interview men, including the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of Defense, the State Department, and President [Harry S.] Truman to stress the necessity of greater defense strength in the Pacific with considerable development of the defense posture in Hawaii. The results of this commission's effort were effective and proved to be of great benefit to our nation and its security in 1950 when the North Koreans moved south against the South Koreans and the communists almost successfully dominated North Korea communists' move toward Japan.

As one activity of my service on the Military Affairs

Committee, I accepted the responsibility for renewing the activity of the Navy League. Since Hawaii is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean it seemed desirable to have an active Navy League here and this organization has continued quite effective since its revitalization. Subsequent to World War II and to the present time, I enjoy being a member of the Army Advisory Committee and the Association of the United States Army as well as a member of the Air Force Association. I have served for eight years as civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army and recently was awarded the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal by the Secretary of the Army.

I was appointed by President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower in 1953 High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. I served in this capacity for two years and until the headquarters were moved from Honolulu to Guam. As a trustee of the Bishop Estate I had accepted this important appointment and honor with the understanding that I could not serve after the headquarters were moved westward away from Honolulu. In this very important post I established the policy of developing the Micronesians so that they would be competent to take over the positions in their own government, commerce, society, education, transportation, communications and health, at first occupied by stateside personnel. This program I pressed as rapidly as possible and felt that more funds should be made available at the time by the Congress to develop their capabilities through education and training of the Micronesians in these various fields.

In 1934 I began the establishment of the community association movement. These at first were rural, the first one being at Waialua, Oahu. In the summer of 1935 I was called upon to teach a class at the University of Hawaii, describing community association theory, policies, activities and cooperation. The enrollment in this class was very large and included many teachers. Since the organization of the first community association at Waialua, others were started at Wahiawa, Aiea, Windward Oahu, Molokai, Honoumuli on the Big Island, Kauai, et cetera, and the movement has spread all over the Islands. It was a good and natural idea and is proving a benefit to many communities at the present time.

I am serving as the vice-moderator (in 1965 as moderator) of the Central Union Church, having been the president of the Board of Trustees last year and the chairman of the New Building Committee. This latter committee directed for church and trustees the construction of several new and important buildings on the church grounds. While chairman of the board last year I supported the program of providing a home for the aging on the former property of Governor and Mrs. [Walter Francis] Frear known as Arcadia. This project seems to be moving forward successfully with the support of Punahou School, which received the area as a gift from the

Frears, Craftmasters, and the Dillingham Corporation.

I am the honorary chairman and am credited with being the founder of the Honolulu Group of International Christian Leadership. Police Chief Dan Liu is the chairman.

I am a director of the Downtown Improvement Association and also of the Oahu Development Conference.

Amongst the various other offices I have held has been the presidency of the University Club. I also served for over two years as president of the Pacific Club and along with former Governor Walter Frear and the late Dr. William Hodgins I am one of the three persons who was president of both of these clubs. During my terms of office, we rehabilitated the old main building and the twenty-four men's apartments. This was difficult as it was during the Depression but this proved very helpful for community and service committees during World War II.

For ten years I had the honor of serving as Royal Danish Consul, being appointed by the King of Denmark to this office. I retired from this consulate at the age of seventy, a requirement of the Danish Foreign Service Law. I was knighted by the King of Denmark and made a Knight of Dannebrog.

The foregoing facts are enumerated, hoping that they may include some items desired by the Retail Board.

Frank E. Midkiff

June 5, 1964

Co-founder with three other civilian friends (Frank Crews) of The 200 Club - president 1968; honorary president 1969

Award of the Sacred Treasure, Second Class 1968 - awarded by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

Defense Orientation Conference Associates - on Board of Directors 1968-70

Prince Akihito Scholarship - one of its organizers 1969

Eagle Scout Sponsor 1970

Re-typed by Katherine B. Allen

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THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.